

# Unit 21E Moose Planning News

Alaska Department of  
Fish and Game

Issue 1, October 2004

## Unit 21E Moose Management Planning Project to Begin

by Randy Rogers, ADF&G Wildlife Planner

In response to concerns expressed by local residents and others, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is proposing to develop a moose management plan for Game Management Unit 21E (see map below). We hope to develop the plan through a cooperative approach involving representatives of the Grayling, Anvik, Holy Cross and Shageluk Fish and Game Advisory Committee (GASH AC) and local communities, the Lower Yukon Advisory Committee, the Western Interior and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Councils, commercial guides and transporters and non-local hunters. While the ADF&G will lead the effort, the Bureau of

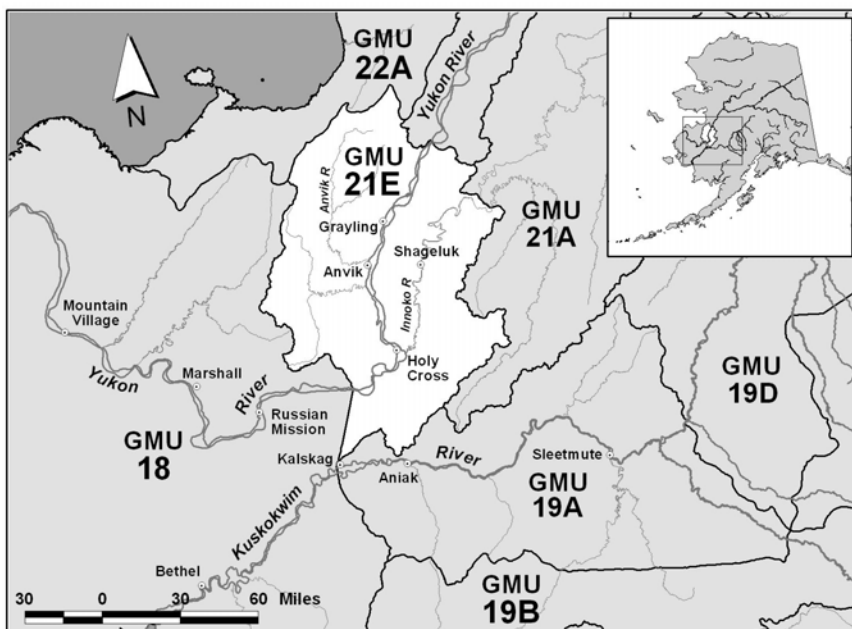
Land Management, Innoko National Wildlife Refuge and federal Office of Subsistence Management will also be involved. Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) are also being invited to participate.

The proposed Unit 21E moose plan project will be discussed at the GASH AC meeting in Anvik in early November. Following that meeting we will seek nominations for representatives on a Unit 21E Moose Working Group. We hope to hold the first Working Group meeting in one of the local communities around January 18-20, 2005.

If all goes well a draft plan and/or proposals for moose hunting regulation changes will be

circulated for public, advisory committee and regional council review and comment in fall 2005. We hope to present the plan to the Alaska Board of Game in March 2006 and bring it to the Federal Subsistence Board in May 2006.

***As the Working Group develops the plan, they will need the input from everyone who has concerns and ideas about moose management in Unit 21E. During the planning process we will send out several issues of the Unit 21E Moose Planning News to keep you informed and provide opportunities for input.***

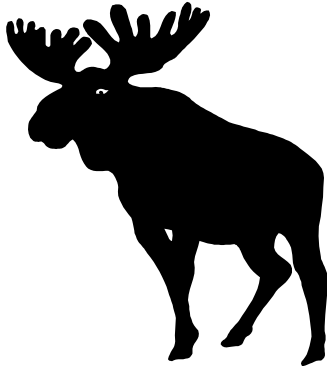


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***Local residents with an interest in fish and game issues and moose management are encouraged to attend the GASH AC meeting or talk with their local representative on the committee.***

## **Unit 21E Moose Planning to be Discussed at the G.A.S.H. Fish and Game Advisory Committee Meeting**

The GASH Advisory Committee (AC) is scheduled to meet at the Anvik City Hall beginning at 6:00 p.m. on November 2. The Unit 21E moose management planning project will be one of the main topics of discussion. Randy Rogers, Wildlife Planner for the Department of Fish and Game, will brief committee members and others about the proposed approach and schedule for developing a Unit 21E moose management plan. The advisory committee will have the opportunity to review the proposed planning process and recommend changes. It is important that the local fish and game advisory committee and others support the approach to be used to develop the plan before the project moves forward. The committee will also likely discuss representation on the Unit 21E Moose Working Group from the GASH AC and local communities.

Other topics on the committee's agenda include:

- Wildlife conservation update by Toby Boudreau, McGrath Area Biologist
- Pike study report by John Burr, ADF&G Sport Fish Division
- Update on household subsistence harvest survey project in GASH communities, Caroline Brown, ADF&G Division of Subsistence
- Innoko National Wildlife Refuge report, Bill Schaff, Refuge Manager

As always, there will be opportunity for public comments and questions during the meeting. Local residents with an interest in fish and game issues and moose management are encouraged to attend the meeting or talk with their local representative on the committee.

## **Nominations for Representatives on the Unit 21E Moose Working Group are Needed**

The proposed representation on the Unit 21E Moose Management Working Group is:

- GASH AC and local communities (4 Working Group members)
- Lower Yukon AC (1)
- Western Interior Regional Advisory Council (1)
- Yukon – Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council (1)
- Alaska resident hunters from outside the local area (1)
- Commercial guides and/or transporters (1)

The two federal regional subsistence advisory councils and the Lower Yukon AC are in the process

of selecting their representatives for the planning process. Representation from residents of Unit 21E will be discussed at the GASH AC meeting and a joint meeting of the tribal council leaders in early November. Through those meetings and this newsletter we are seeking nominations for representatives from the GASH AC and local communities (4), non-local hunters (1) and a commercial guide and/or transporter (1). Nomination forms are available through Randy Rogers at ADF&G. If you would like to nominate someone to serve on the Unit 21E Moose Working Group use a form or write to let us know:

1. What interest the person would represent (e.g., non-local hunter),
2. What experience they have with moose hunting and management in Unit 21E,
3. What experience they have working cooperatively with other people with diverse opinions to develop mutually acceptable solutions.

**Nominations should be submitted to Randy Rogers, ADF&G at the address on the outside of this newsletter. Nominations must be received by November 30.**

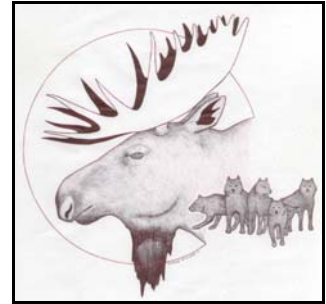
## What Led Up to This Planning Process?

Compared with many areas of interior Alaska the moose population in Unit 21E appears to be healthy. ADF&G moose survey data indicates a relatively stable moose population but surveys in the area have been limited and new information is needed.

At the same time, there are several factors that may increase pressure on the Unit 21E moose population in the near future. Moose populations are low in nearby Units 19A and 18 and hunting regulations have recently been changed in those areas to reduce harvest. This could shift more hunting pressure towards Unit 21E. The Donlin Creek mine and proposed road between the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers could bring more people into the area and increase access and that could also increase pressure on the moose

population.

Residents of the GASH communities have expressed concerns about increased competition for moose and the potential for declines in the moose population for several years. Local residents report that predation on moose has increased and have commented that the ADF&G survey data does not fully describe the situation with the moose population and a decline has been occurring. The Western Interior Regional Advisory Council, GASH AC and others have advocated addressing moose management in the area proactively, rather than waiting for a severe decline in the moose population to occur, a situation that would be much more difficult to correct.



***Residents of Unit 21E have advocated addressing moose management in the area proactively, rather than waiting for a severe decline in the moose population to occur, a situation that would be much more difficult to correct.***

## Let Us Know Your Concerns and Ideas About Unit 21E Moose Management

The ADF&G and federal land management agencies have conducted several meetings on moose in Unit 21E in the last several years. In spring 2002 the ADF&G and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) worked with the GASH village councils to organize and conduct fish and wildlife informational meetings in each village. In October 2002 the ADF&G organized a regional moose management summit in Aniak that included consideration of Unit 21E. A Unit 21E moose management meeting was conducted in Holy Cross on January 29-30, 2003.

The following are a few of the main issues and ideas we heard during those meetings. Please take a quick look through this list. If you have an issue or idea you want to be considered send it to the Unit 21E Moose Working Group, c/o Randy Rogers, ADF&G at the address on the back of this newsletter.

### Some of the concerns we have heard so far:

- Moose are declining with the increasing number of hunters and wolves; local people are worried that there will be no more moose in 20 years.
- Local residents are concerned over subsistence users from downriver or Kuskokwim villages who take moose in Unit 21E during winter.
- Increasing numbers of guides and non-local hunters are causing the decline of moose, not the wolves.
- Some residents of Unit 18 are concerned that the current federal customary and traditional use determination for moose in Unit 21E unfairly excludes communities that have traditionally hunted in Unit 21E.
- There are concerns about non-local guided hunters taking moose antlers and not salvaging the meat.
- We need better information about the moose population, wolf/bear numbers and moose predation.
- Agencies/GASH villages need to improve communication and develop a common understanding about the health of the resource.



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**To submit comments or ideas, get further information, obtain a Unit 21E Moose Working Group nomination form or to submit a nomination contact:**

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## ***Here is your first issue of the Unit 21E Moose Planning News!***

The Unit 21E Moose Planning News will be produced and distributed periodically as we prepare a moose management plan for the area. The newsletter will be sent to residents of Unit 21E, hunters who reported hunting in the Unit in 2003, interested fish and game advisory committees and subsistence councils, big game guides registered for the area and all others who express an interest in the planning process. We welcome your thoughts or comments at any time. All the input we receive will be provided to the representatives who serve on the Unit 21E Moose Working Group.



A grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service helped to fund this publication. ADF&G appreciates this support for the Unit 21E cooperative moose management planning project.

The drawing above and the drawing on the upper right hand corner of page 3 were done by Michael Williams from Beaver